



Growing Seattle's Urban Forest

**2012 comprehensive
planning and regulatory updates**

Open house

August 1, 2012

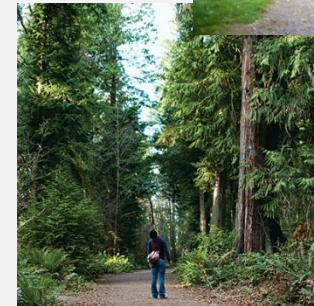
Seattle's urban forest goal



Seattle's urban forest is a thriving and sustainable mix of tree and understory species and ages that creates a contiguous and healthy ecosystem that is valued by the City and all Seattle residents as an essential environmental, economic, and community asset

Who cares for the trees?

- **Public trees**
 - In developed parks and natural areas
 - In City property
 - Owned and managed by City government
- **Private trees**
 - On private property
 - City plays regulatory and supporting role
- **Street trees**
 - In the right-of-way
 - Managed cooperatively between Department of Transportation and adjacent property owners



City department roles

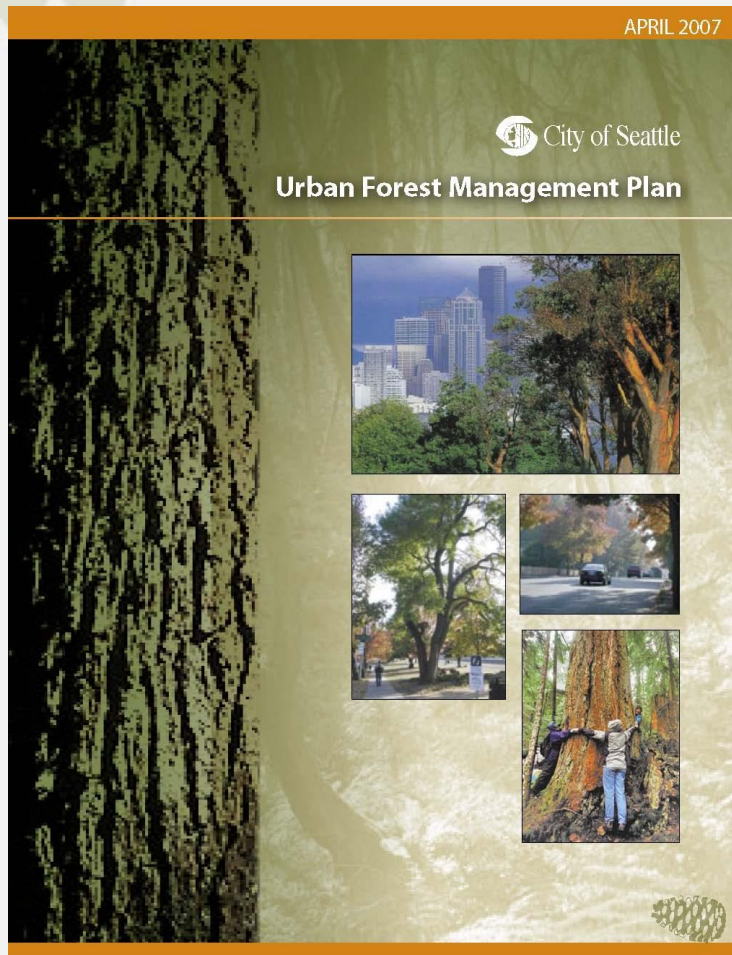
- **DPD** – regulates trees on private property
- **FAS** – manages trees in City properties
- **OSE** – convenes inter-departmental team, coordinates policy issues, monitors performance, staffs Urban Forestry Commission
- **Parks** – plants/cares for trees, restores natural areas
- **SCL** – prunes trees for electrical compatibility, safety, and reliability and funds planting incentives
- **SDOT** – plants/cares and regulates street trees
- **Seattle Center & Zoo** – manage trees on campus-like settings
- **SPU** – stormwater code, manages riparian area trees, funds planting incentives

Urban Forestry Commission

- Created in 2009 to advise the Mayor and City Council on urban forestry plans, policies, and regulations
- Composed of nine members representing different areas of expertise (i.e. wildlife biologist, hydrologist, arborist, etc.)
- Commission holds public meetings twice a month



Urban Forest Management Plan



- Created in April 2007
- Being updated in 2012
- Establishes 30% citywide canopy goal
- Long-, mid-, and short-term strategies for achieving goals
- Implemented through annual workplans
- Managed via an inter-departmental team

What's new since 2007

- **Urban Forestry Commission created in 2009**
- **Created a new, permanent position in 2011 to manage Seattle reLeaf program**
 - Outreach and engagement
 - Trees for Neighborhoods – 2,300 trees
 - Tree Ambassador – 40 in 13 neighborhoods
 - Urban Orchards Stewards – 58 in 5 orchards

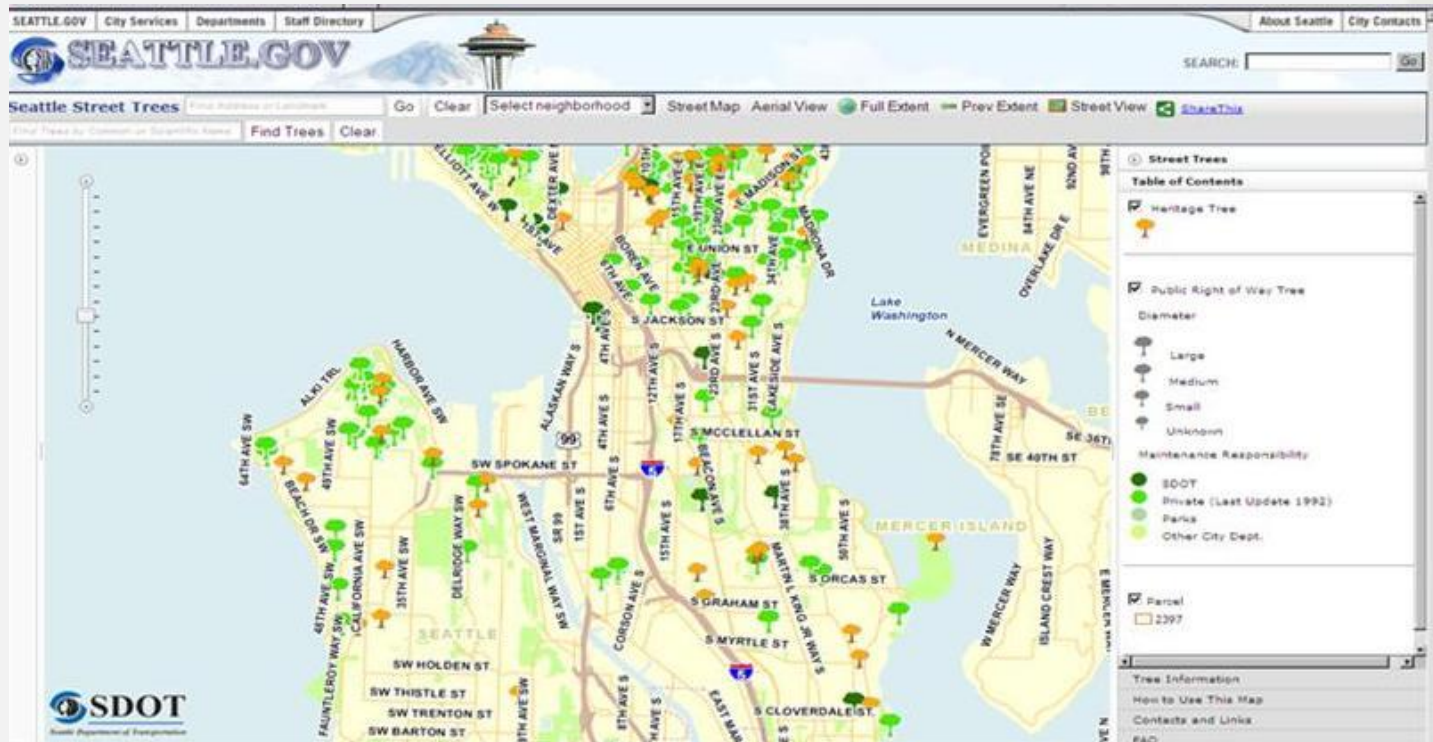


Seattle reLeaf
keep the emerald city green



What's new...

- **Seattle Department of Transportation:**
 - Street tree online map
 - Planted close to 4,500 trees with BTG funding
 - Street Tree ordinance and Manual update



What's new...

- **Parks and Recreation Department:**
 - Green Seattle Partnership:
 - Over 800 acres in restoration
 - Over 500,000 volunteer hours
 - 130 Forest Stewards



What's new...

- **Department of Planning and Development:**
 - GreenFactor
 - Stormwater regulations and rates (with SPU)
 - Private property tree regulations update

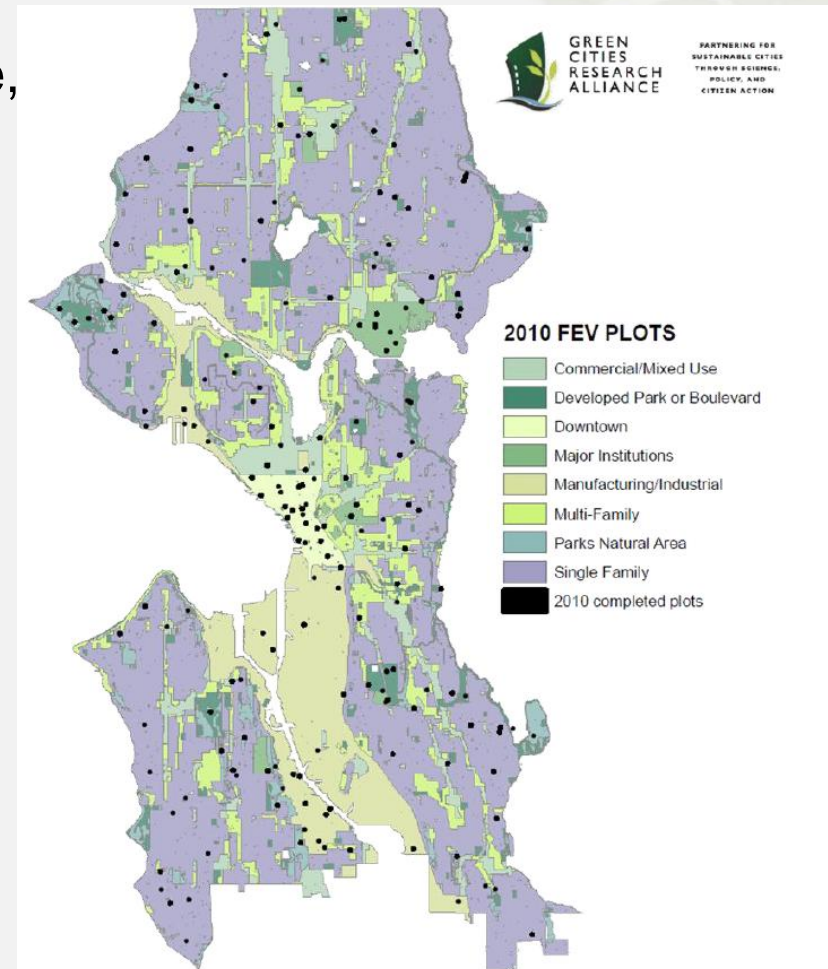


SEATTLE *green factor*



What's new...

- **iTree sampling survey**
 - UW, King County, City of Seattle, and Forterra
 - 2010/2011 data from 223 plots
 - Information included in UFMP update:
 - Condition
 - Evergreen/deciduous breakdown
 - Size
 - Invasive species



UFMP 2012 update

- Citywide canopy goal remains 30%
- Strategies remain the same, including focusing on outreach and engagement in residential areas
- New information on condition of urban forest (health, species, size, invasives) has been incorporated
- Short-, mid-, and long-term action agenda has been updated
- Research agenda added



Canopy cover goals

Land Use Category	2002 Canopy Cover	2007 Canopy Cover	UFMP Canopy Cover Goal
Commercial/ Mixed Use	8.4%	9.7%	15%
Developed Park	25.9%	25.5%	25%
Downtown	9.0%	9.0%	12%
Major Institution	18.4%	19.4%	20%
Industrial	3.8%	4.3%	10%
Multi-Family	16.6%	17.1%	20%
Parks Natural Area	82.5%	80.4%	80%
Single Family	25.2%	25.7%	33%
Total	22.5%	22.9%	30%

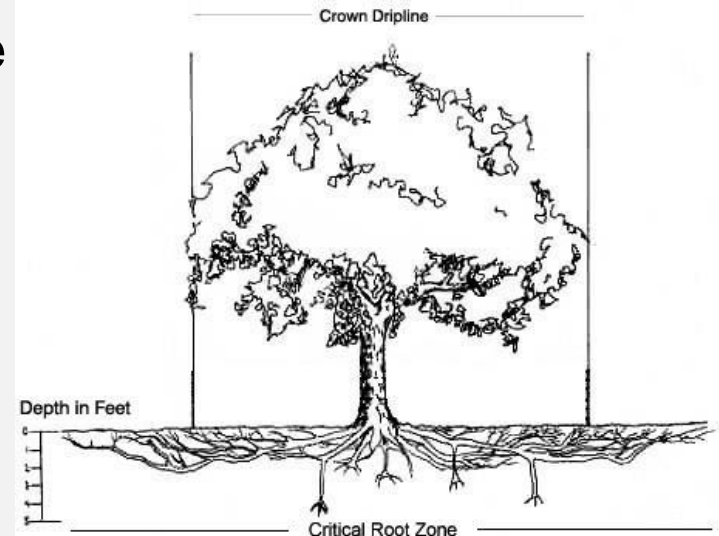
2012 update strategies

- Strategies remain the same but are reframed:
 - Understand
 - Coordinate
 - Preserve and restore
 - Regulate
 - Inspire, inform, and engage



Action Agenda

- Notable short-term actions:
 - Canopy cover assessments every five years
 - Continue two-for-one tree replacement
 - i-Tree data analysis
 - Tree planting potential data “ground-truthing”
 - Develop policy to prioritize expenditures
 - Explore expansion of tree planting incentives
 - Encourage right tree in the right place
 - Expand volunteer opportunities



Research Agenda

- Life-cycle costs of deferred tree planting and maintenance
- Costs/benefits of different pruning cycles
- Monetizing urban forest benefits (i.e. public health, energy, climate change)
- Method to quantify stormwater and water quality benefits



UFMP update contact

Questions or comments
2012 Urban Forest Management Plan update
contact:

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Office of Sustainability & Environment

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Public comment open through October 1, 2012

The slide features decorative leaf patterns in the top-left and top-right corners, rendered in a light green color. The leaves are stylized and overlap, creating a naturalistic border.

Seattle Center

Seattle Center

Manage trees in 72 acre campus in the heart of the city

- Tree canopy cover
 - Goal = 15%
 - Current = 16.2%
- Committed to replacing trees 2 for 1 on all projects
- Chihuly Garden and Glass
 - Canopy trees removed = 20
 - Canopy trees planted = 81



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Seattle City Light

Seattle City Light Vegetation Management Unit

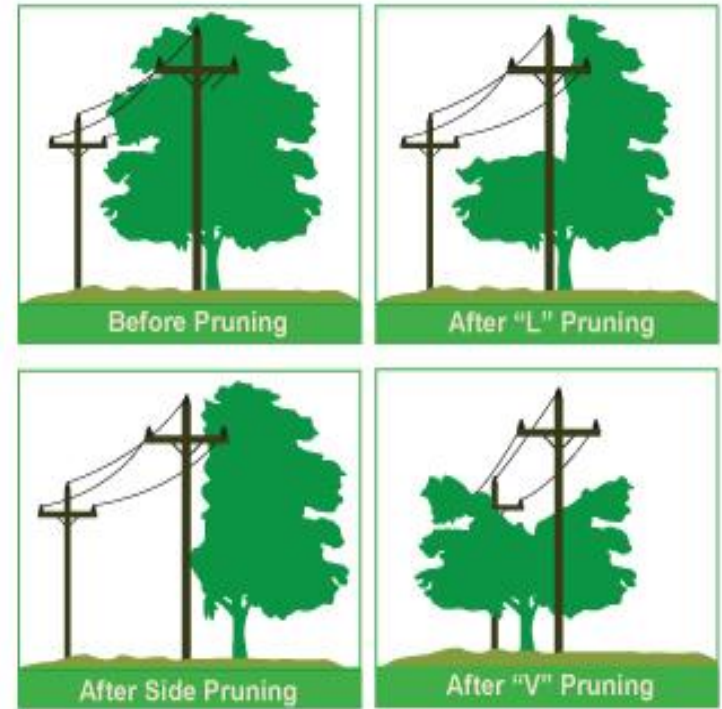


Mission:

Vegetation Management is committed to ensuring safe and reliable power delivery through the comprehensive and environmentally responsible management of the vegetation our lines and infrastructure impact.

Distribution Tree Trimming Program

- Maintains and monitors over 300,000 trees with the potential to grow/fall into our power lines and critical infrastructure.
- Trims along 1,770 miles of overhead lines in Seattle and parts of Burien, Lake Forest Park, Normandy Park, Renton, SeaTac, Shoreline, Tukwila and Unincorporated King County.



Directional Pruning Methods

Distribution Tree Trimming Program

- Maintains required clearances throughout entire service area on a 4-year cycle.
- In 2011
 - Trimmed 605 miles (average 64 trees/mile over entire system)
 - Removed 383 hazardous/problem trees; 187 in City of Seattle

Transmission Right-of-Way Maintenance Program

- Manages vegetation along 657 miles of transmission right-of-way through King, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom and Pend Oreille counties.
- Plant ecologist works to promote low-growing native plants along right-of-way
- Subject to Federal regulation (NERC and FERC).



Urban Tree Replacement Program

- Mitigates for City Light's impacts on the urban forest through outreach and education, neighborhood tree planting projects and appropriate tree replacement



Urban Tree Replacement Program

- “Right Tree Right Place” information
- Partners with Trees for Neighborhoods
- Partners with SDOT on community and other large-scale planting/establishment projects
- Partners with Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association (WSNLA) to provide Urban Landscape Tree Replacement Certificates



Seattle Department of Transportation



SDOT Urban Forestry





Core business

- Regulate tree planting, pruning and removal in public rights-of-way
- Maintain ~40,000 SDOT owned trees
- Maintain 123 acres of landscapes and irrigation systems
- Manage Bridging the Gap funded tree planting & establishment (3 years)
- Provide landscape architectural design services for capital projects
- Review landscape design plans for private development projects
- Conduct inspections during landscape construction





Challenges

- Trees and sidewalk conflicts
- Lack of maintenance for privately owned ROW trees
- Illegal/Unauthorized tree cutting/removal
- Weak regulations
- Meeting long term UFMP goals

Proposed Street Tree Ordinance



**Public Meetings
December 2011 – February 2012**







Focus group/proposed Tree Ordinance review - timeline

- Proposed changes would replace ordinance #90047 (last revised in February 1961)
- Initial input received from focus group. City Staff – Local Arborists – Local non-profits
- Reviewed by the City Attorney's office and the Urban Forestry Commission
- Completed Public Review and Comments in March 2012

Tree protection

CURRENT:

Street Use Ordinance calls only for preserving trees but provides no detail

PROPOSED :

- Makes it illegal to damage or destroy any street tree
- Regulates attachment of holiday lights
- Prohibits topping, spurring, attaching signs or objects
- Prohibits placement of construction debris adjacent to trees
- Regulates the storage of materials adjacent to right-of-way trees
- Tree protection standards are listed in Street Tree Manual

Permitting

CURRENT:

Require permits to plant, prune or remove a street tree.
No requirement to replace a street tree

PROPOSED:

- Describes process & procedures for permit application
- Defines criteria for granting planting, pruning, or removal permits
- Establishes authority to require a replacement tree when a removal permit is granted
- Allows minor pruning of 2" inch diameter limbs or less without a permit. (Slight relaxation of current requirements)

Tree maintenance

CURRENT:

Does not define responsibility for maintenance of right-of-way trees. Abutting property owner is responsible for maintenance of the planting strip

PROPOSED:

- Clarifies SDOT & property owner tree maintenance responsibilities
- Gives City authority to perform emergency work on privately owned ROW trees
- Establishes criteria by which a tree can be deemed a public nuisance
- Retains SDOT's authority to order the maintenance of a right-of-way tree to ensure public safety

Arborist certification

CURRENT:

Does not require any specific qualifications for companies performing tree work or standards for work performed by them

PROPOSED:

- Requires maintenance work to be performed by or supervised by an ISA certified arborist
- Requires tree care firms to register with SDOT and establishes requirements for registration
- Allows a property owner to perform minor pruning without a permit
- Requires a permit for major pruning by property owner
- Requires tree work to meet industry standards

Penalties and fines

CURRENT:

Inadequate penalties for illegal tree work on privately maintained trees

PROPOSED:

- Identifies illegal activities related to the treatment of trees
- Establishes penalties for damaging or destroying trees that may include the appraised value of the tree

Next steps

1. Public meetings: Dec '11- Feb '12 – complete
SEPA checklist is available for review
2. Comment period ended Feb 29, 2012
SDOT responded to comments by Mar 31, 2012
3. Final draft to UFC: November 2011– approved
4. Approval from Mayor & transmittal to Council - pending
5. Council hearing and adoption: Aug – Sept 2012
6. Possible 90 day waiting period before registration
implementation
7. SDOT proposes to work with ISA to provide training
opportunities for tree service providers

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Seattle Parks and Recreation

Urban forestry programs

- Tree Maintenance
- Reforestation Program
- Trails Program
- Natural Areas Maintenance
- Policies and Practices

... will work with all residents to be good stewards of our environment ...

Urban forestry purpose

- Reduce hazards to the public.
- Maintain, preserve, enhance and expand the urban forest.
- Optimize tree canopy and health.
- Manage green infrastructure assets effectively.

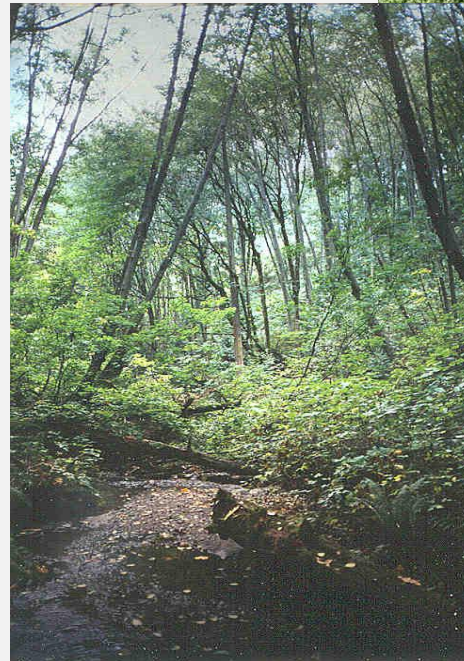
The team

- Resident volunteers
- Highly specialized professionals
Arborists, foresters, coordinators, labor, planners, gardeners
- Non-profit partners
Forterra, Earthcorps, Goodwill, Nature Consortium, Seattle Native Plant Society
- City partners
SPU, DON, SDOT, OSE, DPD



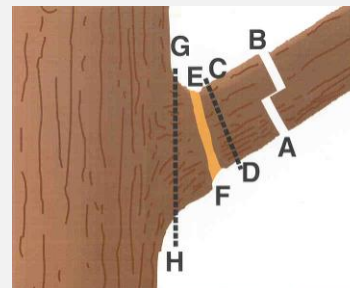
Forest types

- Single trees in developed areas
~90,000 to 120,000 trees
- Closed canopy in forested areas
2,600 acres
~300,000 trees



Tree maintenance

- Highly technical work done to national (ANSI) and international (ISA) standards
- Hazard tree removal, tree assessments, wildlife snags, and pruning
- Customer service and emergency response
- 1 Arboriculturist, 7 Tree Trimmers



Hazard tree mitigation



Public viewpoints

- 24 designated public viewpoints
- Maintaining views by cutting or pruning trees



Project review

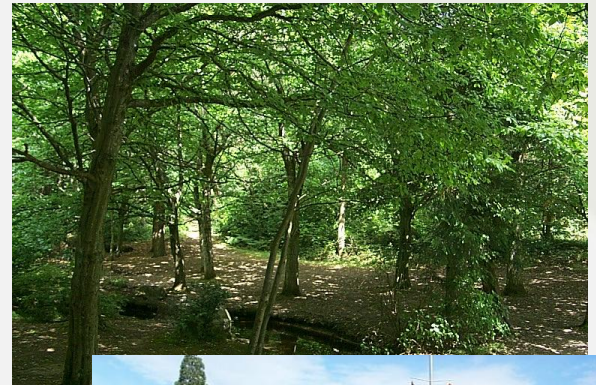
- Retain trees where possible
- Ensure protection during construction
- Remove and replace trees that cannot be protected



Forest restoration program

The Green Seattle Partnership

- Park habitat inventories
- Revegetation planning and habitat restoration
- Volunteer coordination
- Internal coordination
- Contractor management
- 2 Plant Ecologist



Natural area crew

- Only crew directly working on forest restoration
- Focus on Park natural areas
- Maintenance activities
- Lead volunteer activities and youth crews
- Five FTE crew



Wildlife enhancement

Working solutions that:

- Increase wildlife habitat
- Protect people
- Increase ecological diversity





Trails program

- 1 planning specialist
- 1 maintenance worker
- 100 miles of trails







Department of Planning and Development